

**REMARKS**

Claims 1 and 4-7 are all the claims pending in the application. Claim 1 is the only independent claim.

***Drawing Objection***

As an initial matter, the Examiner has objected to claim 7, alleging that no drawing shows the features of claim 7.

As such, Applicants have added new Figs. 8A and 8B, which shows the lock canceller formed with a stopper 5a. Figure 8A is that same as original Fig. 2, except that the stopper 5a is formed on the lock canceller instead of the second housing. In addition, Fig. 8B is not new matter at least because page 4, lines 3 and 4 discusses the fact that the stopper can be provided on the lock canceller.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that this drawing is not new matter. Applicants have also amended the specification to refer to these new drawings.

***Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112***

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one of ordinary skill in the art that the inventors had possession of the invention at the time of filing. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

It appears to be the Examiner's position that the recitation "the engagement detector and the retainer are moved to a third position at which the engagement detector is allowed to be forcibly moved to the first position, in a case where the lock canceller is manipulated when the

engagement detector is placed at the second position” of claim 1 is not supported by the original specification.

However, Applicants respectfully submit that this feature is fully supported in the original specification at least by *non-limiting* embodiment shown in Fig. 6 and the discussion at page 9, lines 11-21, and page 10, lines 1-15. Specifically, when the engagement detector is in the first position and the lock canceller is manipulated, the engagement detector 20 and retainer 11 are moved to the third position shown in Fig. 6, and the engagement detector 20 is allowed to be forcibly moved to the first position.

***Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and §103***

Claims 1, 4, and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (e) as being anticipated by Pederson et al. (US 6,261,115). Claims 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Pederson in view of Kouda et al. (US 5,120,225).

With respect to independent claim 1, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

According to the claimed invention, since the engagement between the first and second housings is not released even if the lock canceller is manipulated when the engagement detector is placed in a second position, it is possible to avoid the accidental disengagement of the housings due to the erroneous manipulation of the lock canceller.

However, Applicants believe that Pederson does not teach or suggest this feature. If the Examiner intends to maintain this rejection, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to identify which structure in Pederson he believes allows the engagement detector and the retainer to be moved to a third position at which the engagement detector is allowed to be forcibly moved

to the first position, in a case where the lock canceller is manipulated when the engagement detector is placed at the second position.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claim 1. In addition, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of dependent claims 4 and 5 at least because of their dependency from claim 1. Furthermore, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of dependent claims 6 and 7 at least because of their dependency from claim 1 and because Kouda, which the Examiner cites as showing a stopper, does not cure the deficiencies in Pederson discussed above.

***New Claim***

In addition, Applicants have added new claim 9 in order to provided alternative claim coverage. Applicants respectfully submit that new claim 9 is supported by the original specification. For example, in the non-limiting embodiment shown in Figs. 5 and 6, the lock canceller is capable of being manipulated toward said second housing when the engagement detector is placed at said second position.

Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to allow independent claim 9 at least because Pederson does not teach or suggest the claimed connector having a lock canceller that is capable of being manipulated toward said second housing when the engagement detector is placed at said second position.

For example, at the position in which Pederson's positive assurance member 16 (engagement detector) locks the engagement member 84 (retainer) in place, the first tongue portion 72 (lock canceller) is not capable of being manipulated toward the connector housing 14. Pederson at Fig. 10d & 8:24-35: ("In this locked mode illustrated in FIG. 10d, the connectors

housings 12 and 14 can not be disconnected because the surface 134 of the engagement member of the locking tongue 70 of the housing 14 cannot be removed from engagement with the surface 46 of the lug 40 of the housing 12. Such removal is prevented because the engagement of the regions 106 and 108 with the surface 172 prevents depression of the first tongue portion 72 in the direction 90, and engagement of the surface 168 with the surface 170 will prevent movement of the engagement member 84 in the direction 92.”)

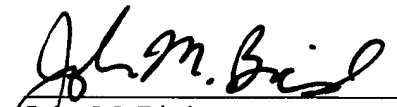
As such, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner allow new claim 9.

***Conclusion***

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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